



HISTORY WEST

THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

Community Talk



**'If you're Australian leave your light on, if you're a foreigner leave now'.
The Yugoslav community and the 1934 race riots in Kalgoorlie and Boulder.**

Dr Criena Fitzgerald

January long weekend in 1934 was one of the hottest on record. Racism, ever present on the mines, was ignited by the death on Sunday of Charles Edward Jordon after a dispute with barman Claudio Mattaboni outside Giannatti's Home from Home Hotel. The following Monday evening a crowd looted and burnt Italian hotels, Yugoslav boarding houses and businesses and Greek businesses in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Residents living on the 'flats' in Boulder were warned, and women and children fled, leaving a small coterie of single men armed with jam-tin bombs to defend their homes. On Tuesday evening, a crowd of over 1,000 looted and burned homes of 'foreigners'. Over 400 Yugoslavs were made homeless. It took two years before compensation was reluctantly given by the government. The riot had a quiet afterlife with oral accounts quietly passed down in families. There is no memorial to the event, the Superpit has consumed the area where the community lived, and there is no plaque on those hotels that were rebuilt. This paper tells of the effects of the riots on the Yugoslav population on the goldfields and gives a voice to their experiences.

Dr Criena Fitzgerald is an oral historian and researcher. She has published several books, including *'Kissing Can Be Dangerous'* *The Public Health Campaigns to Prevent and Control Tuberculosis in WA*, *Turning Men into Stone: A Social and Medical History of Silicosis in WA*, and *Shattered Ideals and Fractured Identities: WA to Yugoslavia and back 1948-1955*. Her new book *For a Better Life* explores the Yugoslav migrant experience in WA and will be available for purchase.

RESCHEDULED Thursday 23 June 2022, 10 for 10.30am

Venue: Stirling House 49 Broadway Nedlands

Tickets \$10 Bookings essential

Tel: 9386 3841 Email admin@histwest.org.au

Tear off slip here

I/we will be attending *Criena Fitzgerald's* Community Talk on Thursday 23 June 2022 at 10.00 for 10.30am.

Cost \$10.00

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